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FACT SHEET

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2006–2007 Ralph N. Kleps Award Recipient: ACTION (After Criminal Traffic Infraction One-Stop Network) Center, Superior Court of Fresno County

A one-stop service center in a centralized court location, the ACTION Center assists offenders in understanding court orders, receiving referrals, and setting up and making payments.

Why This Program Is Innovative

This program is a collaborative effort of the Superior Court of Fresno County, the Fresno County Auditor-Controller's Office, and the Fresno County Probation Department. This program recognized the need of many court users in the community who do not have access to the Internet and have limited literacy and other poverty-related difficulties that can contribute to their confusion and inability to comply. The center comprises a staff person from each collaborating entity, each fully trained in, and with access to, the court's, auditor-controller's, and probation's automation systems, which enables them to provide optimal customer service.

Problems the Program Was Designed to Address

Every courthouse is filled with individuals whose experience with our legal system has left them feeling lost, intimidated, and confused. The court calendars are very large and the pace is very quick. As a result, many offenders are overwhelmed by the legal process and do not completely understand the outcome of their cases or where to go for assistance. The end result is often noncompliance and additional court appearances.

Program Goals and Desired Outcomes

- Foster an environment that insures each defendant understands the orders of the court, is given an opportunity to ask questions, receives appropriate referrals, and leaves the court with knowledge and information necessary to comply.
- Create one centralized location to report to in order to comply.
- Improve how offenders are processed following case disposition.
- Complete more cases in a timely manner and reduce failures to comply.

Actual Program Outcomes and Benefits

- From 2003 to 2005, revenue collected by the center increased by 87% and provided services increased by 72%.
- In 2006, the center assisted more than 25,000 court users and collected more than \$1.5 million in fees and filings.
- A recent customer service questionnaire reflected 90% of those surveyed and reported that the information or a service received at the ACTION Center had increased their ability to comply with court orders.
- All those surveyed found staff at the center helpful in interpreting the court orders.
- Of those surveyed, 66% affirmed that they didn't know where they would go to ask questions if the ACTION Center did not exist.

How This Program Was Originally Funded

Operating costs for the project, part of the court's ongoing budget, are minimal.

Ongoing Budget and Staffing Impacts

The ACTION Center is located in the Central Courthouse and is staffed by two judicial assistants and one staff person from the Probation Department. The court and probation each contribute by providing staff, equipment, and supplies.

How the Program Is Sustained

- All partners have maintained their commitment to the program for over six years, even during challenging budgetary times.
- Program effectiveness and efficiency is evaluated through court user questionnaires and staff observation.
- Procedures are in place to ensure program information is updated at minimum on an annual basis.
- Statistics on the center's activity are maintained.

Recommendations for Courts Wanting to Replicate This Program

- Convene a committee of justice partners and service providers tasked with identifying current processes following disposition, identifying any roadblocks, and recommending solutions to enhance service delivery.
- All partners should commit to combining resources.
- All partners should be willing to commit to cross-training staff and sharing information systems.

Contact:

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Additional resources:

Ralph N. Kleps Award information, www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations
Superior Court of Fresno County's Web site: www.fresnosuperiorcourt.org